



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION COUNCIL DISTRICT 15

Office: 131 Livingston Street, Room 301, Brooklyn, New York 11201

[CEC15@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CEC15@schools.nyc.gov) | tel. 718-935-4267 | [facebook.com/CECD15](https://facebook.com/CECD15) | [CECD15.org](https://CECD15.org)

---

April 29, 2025  
Calendar Meeting

### President's Report - Antonia Ferraro Martinelli

Welcome to CEC15's April Calendar meeting. We are here tonight at PS 321's new space on President Street. Thank you Principal Elizabeth Phillips for welcoming us into your beautiful school. Would you like to share any updates?

This meeting is also our final joint meeting with the District 15 PTA Presidents' Council. Before I get into my updates I want to turn it over to Presidents' Council Co-Presidents Elton Dodson and Liz Sanders.

Thank you Elton and Liz.

April is **Arab American Heritage Month**. As always, I have some culturally relevant books to share.

*Halal Hot Dogs* by Susannah Aziz, is about a young boy named Musa. Every Friday after Jummah prayer at the masjid, his family has a special Jummah treat. They take turns picking out what the treat will be. Finally, it's Musa's turn to pick, and he picks his favorite-halal hot dogs! But actually getting to eat this deliciousness turns into a journey riddled with obstacles. Will he ever get his favorite tasty treat?

and

*Bilal Cooks Daal* by Aisha Saeed, which was briefly [banned](#) in York, Pennsylvania for [depicting religious minorities and Islamic themes](#). The ban was rescinded after a year. The book does depict an Islamic family, which is still legal as far as I know. However, it is really about sharing a delicious dish with friends and developing the patience to wait for it to be ready.

April is also **Autism Awareness Month**. I feel it is important to rebuke the wrong headedness of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., US Secretary of Health and Human Services, who recently stated that autistic children “will never pay taxes or hold a job,” and that “we are doing this to our children and we need to put an end to it.” There is a spectrum of support needs among those diagnosed with Autism and even those with great support needs can function and live full lives. It seems RFK, Jr. views autistic children as a societal burden. Colin Killick, Ex. Dir. of the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, characterized the remarks as eugenic, particularly when taken together with the proposed Autism registry. Whatever the adjective, we should all be disturbed by RFK, Jr.’s remarks. We must not write off the lives of Autistic children particularly when there is so much we can do as a society to improve the lives of all those with differences. For now, it seems HHS has reversed course on this misguided registry.

## **Updates**

### **Curriculum Changes**

The Mayor announced Curriculum Changes to Reading and Math for Middle Schools. D15 is not in Phase I and thus not adopting these changes in the fall.

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/newyork/2025/04/21/nyc-reads-solves-curriculum-mandate-middle-school-expansion-eric-adams/>

### **Class Size Mandates**

And Mayor Adams announced the city will hire 3,700 teachers at 750 schools throughout the city for the coming academic year. The money will go to schools that submitted proposals for reducing class sizes last fall. I met with PS 107 last week. They are one of four schools that did not receive the funding because the dynamics of their school necessitated an enrollment reduction. Supt. Alvarez will share more on this tonight. I know schools like PS 107 want to know what the plan is for schools that simply do not have an inch of additional instructional space.

<https://gothamist.com/news/mayor-adams-reverses-course-on-ny-education-law-paving-way-for-smaller-classrooms>

### **Great News at K293!**

I have great news! There has been progress on the space issues at the building known as 15K293 on Baltic St. that houses K497, Digital Arts and Cinema Technology, D75 Star Academy and Success Academy Cobble Hill. Success Academy has agreed to return 9 classrooms. Principals have been notified and a meeting is scheduled to reallocate the space among the three schools. The BUP will not be formally amended but the Office of District Planning believes that the space is being returned “in good faith.”

## **CEC Elections are Underway**

**Voting was temporarily paused on Friday. Those who voted on Friday prior to the pause will need to vote again. I anticipate an update from FACE on what steps FACE is taking to contact voters to let them know their vote was voided.**

While the application period has ended, interested applicants are encouraged to also [apply](#) to the Borough President for an appointment.

Videos of the Candidate forums that took place in March can be viewed [here](#). District 15 held two candidate forums so be sure to watch both.

The voting period runs from **April 25 to May 13**. You must have a NYCSA account to vote. Please make sure you have a [NYCSA](#) account and that your child's information is connected to your account! You need a code from your parent coordinator to allow your child's data to be connected to your account. If you haven't used your NYCSA, it may be deactivated.

### **BP Application**

<https://nycdoe.eballot.com/BPPA/en-BPApplicationForm>

### **Candidate Forums:**

<https://www.schools.nyc.gov/get-involved/families/education-councils/elections/candidate-forums>

### **Check your NYCSA Account!!**

[https://www.schoolsaccount.nyc.gov/?link\\_id=2&can\\_id=5b2d0a9f37e91a08eccf05f58a403ad1&source=email-resolutions-workshop-today&email\\_referrer=email\\_2660047&email\\_subject=state-education-budget&&](https://www.schoolsaccount.nyc.gov/?link_id=2&can_id=5b2d0a9f37e91a08eccf05f58a403ad1&source=email-resolutions-workshop-today&email_referrer=email_2660047&email_subject=state-education-budget&&)

## **CEC15 Vacancy**

CEC15 currently has two vacancies on the council: one for the parent of an English Language Learner and another for the parent of a District 75 student.

**Please apply to the DOE directly at [CCECinfo@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CCECinfo@schools.nyc.gov). Do not submit the application to CEC15. [Applications](#) in nine languages and all information about eligibility to CECs can be found [here](#). Please also visit [CECd15.org](http://CECd15.org) to learn more about our organization.**

## **Panel for Education Policy (PEP) Elections**

The vacant Brooklyn seat on the PEP has been filled. **Dr. Meryem Bencheikh-Ellis** has been selected to represent Brooklyn families on the Panel for Educational Policy until the new term

begins in July. CEC presidents will again convene to interview candidates and hold another vote for the new term. The application period ended on April 15th. I anticipate more information to come.

### **PEP April Meetings**

The next PEP meeting is Wednesday, April 30 at 6pm at Sunset Park High School (153 35th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11232) Speaker sign-up will begin at 5:30PM, at the door, and will close promptly at 6:15PM.

Whether you attend or not, you can **send written testimony to the 24 PEP members** using [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezM7S0zfCMXb\\_BiXecJSnxsfl1E27CbCTwT0TflzuZbe3cAQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSezM7S0zfCMXb_BiXecJSnxsfl1E27CbCTwT0TflzuZbe3cAQ/viewform)

### **Teacher Appreciation Week**

Don't forget your teachers and school staff on National Teacher Day which is May 6, 2025, and National Teacher Appreciation Week is [May 5-9, 2025](#).

### **Librarians Equal Literacy**

Exciting news— advocacy efforts are paying off!!! The strong show of solidarity and powerful testimony at the April 8th rally + hearing for the [Librarians Count Bill](#) made a HUGE impact.

The Council has quickly advanced the bill and on Thursday, May 1st, it will get its vote!—first by committee and then the whole New York City Council. With a majority of the council members (29) co-sponsoring the bill going into the vote, they are confident it will pass.

Join Librarians Equal Literacy: May 1 at NOON on the City Hall Steps to celebrate their first major victory on the path to restore librarians and libraries in NYC schools.

[RSVP here so we know you're coming!](#)

### **New York State Budget**

Hochul's bell-to-bell [smartphone ban](#) in schools made it into the final budget. The governor also said that the state will invest at least \$37 billion toward education, but she did not provide any more information about [Foundation Aid](#), other than to say that they will replace antiquated poverty metrics with current census data. Recall that at the end of last year, the Rockefeller Institute released a lengthy study with recommendations on how to make adjustments to the state's main avenue allocating education funds. The changes to the formula Hochul initially proposed meant that NYC would receive \$350 million less than before the proposed changes. It seems the matter is not quite settled and AQE is encouraging parents to call the Governor to demand a better Foundation Aid deal for NYC schools.

[https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2025/04/gov-kathy-hochul-announces-254-billion-state-budget-deal/404905/?oref=csny\\_alert\\_nl](https://www.cityandstateny.com/policy/2025/04/gov-kathy-hochul-announces-254-billion-state-budget-deal/404905/?oref=csny_alert_nl)

### **Protect School-Based Health Centers**

I am also keeping my ear to the ground on School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs). On May 1, 2025, the State is planning to require School-Based Health Centers (SBHCs) to be moved into Medicaid Managed Care (MMC) to receive Medicaid payments. This proposed shift from SBHCs receiving direct payments for services provided through the State Health Department, to needing to contract with, bill, and hope for payments from managed care plans could force SBHCs to close or reduce services. Please join the New York State School-Based Health Alliance to urge state lawmakers and Governor Hochul to stop this carve-in through the final budget before it significantly disrupts care for vulnerable children.

This is concerning because this transition makes SBHCs subject to the whims of the federal government on the issue of Medicaid and there is the concern that Medicaid payments will be insufficient.

Share Petition in Chat:

[Protect School Based Health Centers](#)

### **NYC Ferry**

NYC Public Schools is partnering with NYC Ferry to provide discounted ferry tickets to high school students. Families must access their ferry discount code through their NYCSA account. For any additional information on the program, visit [ferry.nyc/student-discount](https://ferry.nyc/student-discount).

Within the NYCSA portal, navigate to the “transportation” tab at the top of the webpage. If the student is eligible, there should be a pop up with the NYC Ferry logo with a button to “request discount code.” Discount Codes can only be applied once within one NYC Ferry account and cannot be applied to both the App for mobile discount tickets and on the website for paper discount tickets.

*Please note that:*

- Student Discount Tickets are only valid for use on weekdays.
- All Student Discount Tickets will expire on August 31, 2025.
- Students must re-enroll in the program each year.

---

And finally, in my continuing segment called, **Federal Government Watch**

New York is part of a group of states [suing the federal government](#) over Education Secretary Linda McMahon's decision to cut off hundreds of millions in COVID aid that school districts were expecting to have through next year to spend. In New York's case, that meant losing out on \$134 million the state had planned to spend on programs that help homeless youth, facilities repairs and additional classroom space, as well as additional library books, playground equipment, and wheelchair-accessible buses.

### **New Federal Executive Orders**

The Trump Administration issued two new executive orders: [Reinstating Common Sense School Discipline Policies](#) and [Advancing Artificial Intelligence Education for American Youth](#)

But there is also **some good news**, a judge issued a temporary injunction that blocks the Trump administration from penalizing states that don't sign the anti-DEI certification document and from enforcing their February Dear Colleague letter. Recall that [more than a dozen states](#) have refused to sign the certification.

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/2025/04/24/trump-education-department-anti-dei-efforts-in-schools-hit-roadblock/>

To keep up to date on federal actions and other education news, I recommend Leonie Haimson's radio show - *Talk Out of School*. Recent episodes cover [The lawsuit to stop Trump from dismantling the Dept of Education](#) and ask the question [Is Trump Trying to Force Education Into a New Dark Age?](#)

<https://talk-out-of-school.simplecast.com/>

Leonie will be with us at our next Business meeting on Tuesday, May 13